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SUBJECT: DOES EVERYONE LOVE A PARTY? TAJIKS ABOUT TO FIND OUT

11. (SBU) Three new political parties have recently started the process of registering with Ministry of Justice. Whether they will be successful depends less on their paperwork and more on their support of or threat to existing power structures.

12. (U) Party of the Economic Reform of Tajikistan (PERT): Chairman Olim Boboev, rector of the University of Transport, former rector of the University of Trade, and 1994 International Visitor Program alumnus, has gathered support from economists, social scientists and businessmen, mainly from the Hisor Valley and Sughd region. The 1119-member party wants to reduce the power of the president by transferring some presidential authority to the Prime Minister; it also aims to strengthen Tajikistan's market economy. The party has no headquarters; the chairman is currently managing all day-to-day party business.

13. (SBU) Boboev is a pragmatic, strong economist, short on charisma but long on economic and trade experience. Four years ago, the government replaced him as rector for the University of Trade with someone from the President's home region. Boboev is not particularly pro-government, and feels that existing political parties cater too strongly to particular regions and interests.

14. (SBU) COMMENT: The PERT represents a quiet movement of people who want more than just stability from the government and have become increasingly disenchanted with the Government's slow pace of reform. Chances of Registration: 1 in 10. (Our "books" on the chances of registration are all in-house and the odds purely speculative.) END COMMENT

15. (U) Progressive Youth Party of Tajikistan (PYPT): Not to be deterred by conventional definitions of youth, 45-year old, Saidja'far Ismonov founded the Party of the Progressive Youth of Tajikistan (PYPT). A long-time Communist Youth (Komsomol) worker, which he turned into the Youth Committee of Tajikistan, Ismonov teaches at the Agrarian University of Tajikistan. The party has more than 750 supporters from across the country who have applied to be members, and convoked its first congress at the Agrarian University September 12. However, according to Tajikistan's Law on Political Parties, an educational facility cannot be used for political activities, so another congress is planned for October 29 in the building of the State Publishing House Sharqi Ozod.

16. (U) According to Ismonov, the PYPT goals include assisting the Government to strengthen democratic institutions and implement the rights fixed in the Constitution to protect the peace, security and the public tranquility. The party also aims to help young people better understand their rights and improve their status in the society.

17. (SBU) COMMENT: The party is largely thought to be a spin-off of the ruling PDPT. At the first PYPT meeting, Ismanov let slip that he already belongs to the PDPT, which marred the image of the Progressive Youth as a "new" party. Ismanov is known for being loyal but not particularly articulate. His platform essentially supports the existing power structure. Some say government forces are behind the creation of the Progressive Youth party so that the PDPT will not be the only pro-government party in the next parliamentary elections. However, the obvious connections between Ismanov and the government may now hinder his party's chances for registration and popularity. Chances of Registration: 1 in 2. END COMMENT

18. (U) Party of Vahdat (Unity) of Tajikistan (PVT): Chairman Hikmatullo Saidov, 47, is trying for the second year to get his Vahdat (Unity) party registered. The government last year denied the party registration after allegedly finding several false signatures in applications of supporters/members in the Jirgatal District. Most of the 2000 PVT members come from the Rasht region, previously an opposition stronghold, and now live in various districts in the south.

19. (U) Saidov is a former member of the presidium of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan who broke off after differences with party leaders. His party represents the interests of the Garmi popular people as well as Davlat Usmon, former member and deputy chairman of the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRPT), and

former Deputy PM and Minister of Economic and Trade. Usmon is

rumored to want to run in the November 2006 presidential elections, but needs a political party to nominate and support him during the election. (Note: In previous elections, Usmon only reluctantly ran as an IRPT candidate.)

110. (SBU) COMMENT: The Government knows that the PVT will nominate Usmon for the presidential election and may try to block the party's registration. On the other hand, the President will need at least one opponent to make it a race. Chances of registration: 1 in 40. END COMMENT.

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